



# News Release

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Contact: [Kristen Maki](#), Communications, 360-545-2944

## **COVID-19 risk remains high in Washington state despite decreasing activity**

**OLYMPIA** – Today the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) released the latest [statewide situation report](#). The report shows an overall decline in COVID-19 cases in western Washington and a plateau in eastern Washington, with significant differences from county to county.

Report findings include:

- **The reproductive number (how many new people each COVID-19 patient will infect) was close to one in both western and eastern Washington as of August 29.** The best estimates of the reproductive number at that time were 1.07 for western Washington and 0.94 for eastern Washington. The goal is a number well below one, which would mean COVID-19 transmission is declining.
- **We're seeing an overall decline in case counts in western Washington and an overall plateau in eastern Washington.** These trends are not uniform and we continue to see very different trends from county to county. In western Washington, the decrease has slowed in Clark, Pierce, Snohomish and Whatcom counties, and cases are increasing in Lewis County. In eastern Washington, decreases have plateaued in Benton, Franklin, Grant and Spokane counties, and cases are increasing in Adams and Whitman counties.
- **These overall trends also differ by age.** The recent increase in cases among 18 to 24 year olds in eastern Washington was driven by an outbreak in Whitman County. In western Washington, we're seeing moderate increases in cases among people age 0 to 17 and 25 to 39. Because increased disease activity in younger populations tend to spread into older and more vulnerable groups, these trends are cause for concern.

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- **Risk remains high throughout the state.** Because the vast majority of the population does not have immunity to COVID-19, an outbreak can quickly spread through a community and into the most vulnerable populations.

“While we continue to see some encouraging declines in case counts, it is clear we cannot let our guard down,” said Secretary of Health John Wiesman. “The counties where we are seeing plateaus or increases in case counts illustrate the continued importance of limiting the size and frequency of our in-person gatherings, wearing face coverings and staying home when we are sick. We must all consistently take these steps in order to safely reopen schools and protect our communities.”

DOH partners with the Institute for Disease Modeling, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, University of Washington and the Microsoft AI for Health program to develop this weekly report. More COVID-19 data can be found on the [DOH website](#) and in the state’s [risk assessment dashboard](#).

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